Provost 3

A Comprehensive Review

By Dragonfly Mike

I have spent a total of 4 weeks testing the Provost 3. I smoked numerous bowls with the system, ranging from phunnel to Turkish. I used three different foil brands: 320 Foil, Stan Texture Foil, and Fumari Pre-Poked. I used 320 coals of different shapes and sizes. I used both extra rings with the device. There are slight differences between the Provost 3 and previous models.

I have broken down the testing into seven different sections:

Packaging, Aesthetics, Construction, Flavor, Ease of Heat Management, Cleaning and Setup, and Smokeability.

I will rate these on a scale of 1 to 10, one being the lowest and ten being the highest. The categories are observations and opinions; they are not based on fact. I would like to state that I am not a typical Provost user. I have disliked it in the past, and that may affect my opinions.

1.) **Packaging – 6/10**

There is nothing remarkable or noteworthy about the Provost packaging. It is thin plastic. It has no notable or eye catching features. The front lip is a bit hard to keep closed once the lid has been opened. It is minimal, which isn't inherently bad, but not something I would consider

good.

2.) **Aesthetics – 7/10**

The device looks fine as a whole piece. The base looks like a metal screen with a little leaf handle. It is unremarkable. I do like the leaf handle. The lid forming a Yin Yang is a cool idea. It has a recognizable look. The added rings do help a little. The smallest ring fits on several bowls absolutely perfectly. So much so, you can lay foil flat on the bowl, push down the ring, and it tightens the foil in one go. I do absolutely love that and will talk about that in "Cleaning and Setup." That is why I added one point to the score.

3.) **Construction – 5/10**

The Provost has always come across as just a thin metal screen to me. The lid rattles from the slightest movement. The metal seems thin and easily bent. It is cheaper than many other HMDs, and it feels cheaper as well. I can go to any hardware store and make the bottom half for even cheaper, a screen bent up with a screw and little silicone sleeve for a quarter of what the Provost costs, and it would be almost the same thing. However, with the added rings, when everything is put together on a bowl, it seems far more sturdy and well-made. One of the biggest drawbacks about the Provost 3 is that it does not stop the coals from touching the foil. While the bottom is concave and slightly raised, ash falls down onto the foil and works its way into the bowl, something that happens far less with other HMDs.

4.) **Flavor – 6/10**

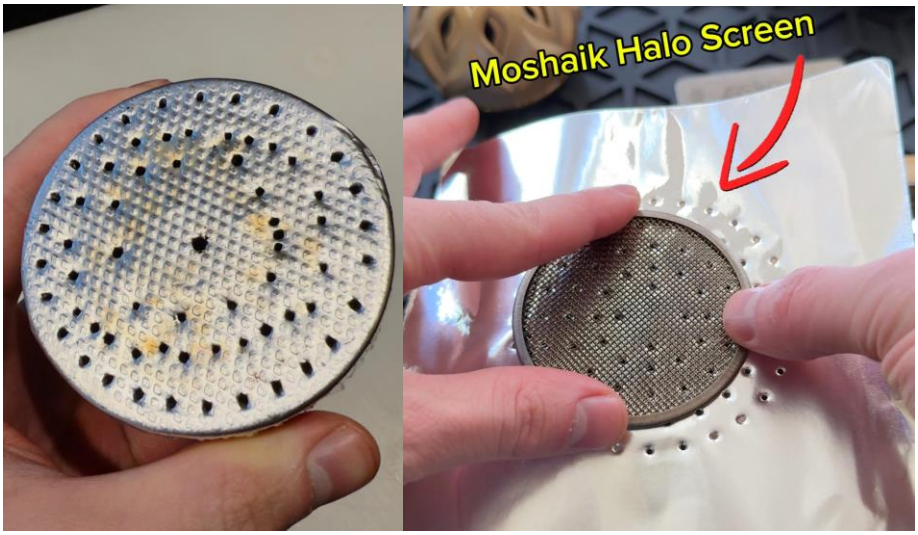
I rarely have a good session with the Provost. It does start out okay. Flavor is good and what is to be expected. However, halfway through the session, I taste coal, or anytime I add the lid, I get a coal taste. The added rings did help in diminishing this problem, but it is still present. It is important to note that I have had more "OK" sessions ever since I started using the added rings. The coal taste is not nearly as prominent, but it is still present. The taste of coals is a bowl killer.

5.) **Ease of Heat Management – 6/10**

I rarely finish a session because of the coal taste that becomes so present in my smokes. The start of the session is very easy. It starts up within minutes of placing the coals on the bottom screen. From there, the only reason for heat management is ashing the coals as they become smaller. I have tried using less heat to see if that would help prevent the coal taste, and it does not. The sessions that I did finish (one round of coals), I noticed there was far more wet in the tobacco compared to my traditional setup. This tells me that the Provost has the potential to provide longer sessions, but I have yet to experience that because I do not want to taste coals. That is a bowl killer.

6.) **Cleaning and Setup – 9/10**

This is the best thing about the Provost 3. It is a breeze to set up and clean. The added bowl rings have a really cool aspect to them. The small bowl ring fits perfectly on many of my bowls. So perfectly, I can lay a piece of foil flat on the bowl, push down the ring, and it not only tightens the foil but cuts it off. I can then poke holes (with the ring still on) without the foil sagging or needing to be retightened. I knocked a point off because I found the best way to use the Provost 3 is to add a part that isn't part of the HMD. This prevents the foil from browning, something that I never want to see happen. It means too much heat is being directed into a single spot, creating hot spots. It also shows that the Provost isn't stopping the coals from making direct contact with the foil or that the heat is not being evenly distributed throughout the session. It is a result of hot spots, which can happen with other HMDs, but not to the same degree.



The Left picture is the result of a "finnished" session.

The right picture shows the screen I used. This screen helped prevent browning of the foil.

7.) **Smokeability – 3/10**

I do not want to use the Provost. However, with the added rings, I thought I would give it another go. While the rings do help, at the end of the day, I would rather not smoke at home than use the Provost. If it was the only HMD available, as long as the extra bowl rings were present, I would use it over putting coals directly on the foil.

Median Score:

The average score results in a 4.2/10. Despite my dislike for the Provost 3, the rings are an improvement. I had more "OK" or good smokes with the added bowl rings than I have with any previous Provost. When adding the extra screen in conjunction with the bowl rings, I was able to find a way to make the Provost 3 work in an almost acceptable way. I do not feel these things warrant a full raise in overall score, but it is something that should be factored into the

rating. As a result, I will add .3 to the final score, which bumps up the overall rating to 4.5/10.

Final Summation:

This was a challenging process for me. I know that the Provost, in any variation, is a popular device. So much so that when I attend events, I seek out people that use it exclusively. I doubt my own preferences because I do not like it and see many people use it often, successfully. And yet, even when those people have packed the bowl and been in charge of heat management, I still do not enjoy the session. In those settings, it is far from the main focus. I happily partake and enjoy the company and people around me. But in my home, I cannot use it, nor do I want to. But the added rings are intriguing to me. I find myself wanting to test it out more. I want to try to find a way to consistently use the Provost 3 in a way that provides enjoyable smokes. Despite the low score, I think the added rings add more potential to the device. But again, that potential is only present because of the added screen.